

The big news from Chrysler Corp. was the Valiant compact car, which helped to improve the corporation's respectability in an industry which produced over 19.7% more passenger cars during this calendar year than it did in 1959. Chrysler's share of the industry total rose to 15.22%, reflecting a production increase of more than 38.1%. In overall computations, Valiant production was combined with Plymouth's, which scored a gain of better than 17.1% over the previous year. The rise was not enough to keep Plymouth in the industry's 3rd position, which was lost to the Rambler by a margin of only 1,776 cars, pressing Plymouth down to 4th place. DeSoto suffered a smothering compression caused by a shocking drop in demand which cut its production to 51.5% less than its 1959 total and lowered it to the industry's 14th position.

Chrysler's experiments with small cars of its own design began at least 26 years before the Valiant went into production, but the development program which produced the Valiant did not stem from any earlier exploration. Begun as Project A-901 in May of 1957, concentrated effort to bring the little car to reality got underway in mid-1958. During the final surge of development, 32 prototypes were handbuilt for testing which rolled up a total of more than 750,000 miles. In addition, 57 engines were built and rigorously tested.

During the final detailing phase, a name was sought. Within styling and engineering activities, "Falcon" had been used in verbal references to the car, but eventual word of Ford's selection of that name for its own compact ended its use. Finally, five names, including "Valiant," were chosen from a list of thousands and submitted to 2,017 automobile owners across the country, and the majority preference ended the search for a name. For this first year only, the Valiant was a distinct brand, emphasized by Chrysler Corp. publicity which boasted six separate brands of passenger cars built in the U.S.: Plymouth, Dodge, DeSoto, Chrysler, Imperial and Valiant.



The first production Valiant is shown as it neared the end of the line in the Dodge Hamtramck plant. It was greeted by L. L. Colbert, Chrysler's finger-pointing board chairman, and other executives. Chrysler called the Valiant a distinct brand of car, not related to Plymouth, DeSoto, Dodge or the others. However, the new baby remained in that status for this year only. The center-confined grille idea would be common by 1977.

Further pointing up its independence, promotional media boldly stated that it was "Nobody kid's brother, this one stands on its own four tires—." So it was not a Plymouth Valiant, nor any other brand's Valiant. And it rated equal status with others when the new Plymouth-DeSoto-Valiant Division was created.

Built in Dodge plants, Valiants were sold by dealers who sold Plymouths. Valiant was the answer to domestic and export demands for compact-size cars. Since 1955, sales of imported small cars had risen at an alarming rate while exports of American cars dropped off sharply. Valiant sales success was immediate. In step with its individuality, styling was distinctive and unlike any other car. It bore an abundance of engineering newness, too. Unitized body construction was based on a wheelbase of 106.5 inches. Sedans, when measured in overall inches, had a length of 184, height of 53.3 and width of 70.4. Suburbans were generally a trifle larger.

One 6-cylinder engine design, first intended to be made mostly of aluminum, was common to all Valiants and could be had with the standard 3-speed manual transmission with floor shift or an optional pushbutton-operated 3-speed automatic similar to TorqueFlite. Torsion bar front suspension and asymmetrical leaf-type rear springs were used. Tire size was 6.50 x 13, fitted to 13-inch wheels. Power steering and power brakes were options. Valiant was presented in two series known as V-100 and V-200, each having a 4-door Sedan and a 4-door Suburban, the latter available in 2 and 3-seat versions. The V-100 was designated Series QX1-L and the V-200 was QX1-H.

Plymouth presented all-new designs with unitized body front-end structures but kept former wheelbases of 118 inches for all but Suburbans, which rode on 122 inches. A new Fleet Special series, with 6 and V-8 engines and 2 and 4-door sedans for taxicab companies, was inserted at the bottom of the series roster. Next above it was the Savoy line, which in V-8 form was the Series PP2-L with



The V-100 series was Valiant's economy line. The V-100 4-Door Sedan was Valiant's lowest-priced and lightest model, being priced at \$2,053 and weighing 2,635 pounds. A total of 52,788 were built. Externally, the series was identified by a lack of bright trim molding on the lower body sides and the rear fenders. Deliberately, the new Valiant styling concept was created to make it different from any other car of its time.

models. The Belvedere V-8, PP2-M, had three models and the V-8 Fury PP2-H offered four. The V-8 Suburban and PP2, comprised six models. A Sport Fury series did not appear this year. All but the Fury Convertible, Sport Suburbans and 9-passenger Custom Suburbans were available with 6-cylinder engines, for which the primary series designation was PP1. It is interesting that the economy could be had in more models this year.

After many years of service, Plymouth offered the familiar L-head 6-cylinder engine no more. In its place was the new 30-D Economy Six, the same slanted design as used by Valiant but with a 4.125-inch stroke and 225-cubic-inch displacement which produced 145 horsepower at 4,000 r.p.m. A new V-8, the SonoRamic Commando, was added as the top engine option. Featuring sweeping 30-inch intake manifolding and dual 4-barrel carburetion, a bore and stroke of 4.25 x 3.38 inches, displacement of 141 cubic inches and 10.1:1 compression ratio provided 130 horsepower at 4,800 r.p.m. The Golden Commando V-8 and Fury V-800 with Super-Pak were continued unchanged and were again optional. The standard V-8 engine remained the Fury V-800, which was not changed in specifications or power.

Plymouth no longer had an overdrive transmission. Manual 3-speed units were standard for all models, but a new heavy-duty design was specified for SonoRamic and Golden Commando engines. TorqueFlite was now an all-model option and PowerFlite could be had for all V-8s except the two Commandos.

DeSoto, experiencing rough going in its struggle for survival, could offer only two series for 1960. Gone were the Firesweep and Firedome. The Fireflite, Series PS1-L, was now the low-cost series, priced about where the Firesweep would have been. The Adventurer, Series PS3-M, no longer a luxury/sports specialty, was in a price bracket just below the Fireflite of 1959. Each series had three like models, and no convertibles or station wagons were offered. All cars rode on a 122-inch wheelbase and 8.00 x 14 tires. Styling and construction were completely new, featuring Chrysler's new Unibody structural design which joined the body unit to the front frame assembly in a

unitized manner. It was featured by all but Imperial.

The Fireflite's standard engine was the Firesweep Turboflash V-8 of 1959, while the standard Adventurer powerplant was the same as the former Firedome had. The latter engine was now available with two power-packing options. One was called the Adventurer Mark I, utilized a 4-barrel carburetor, developed 325 horsepower at 4,600 r.p.m. and could be ordered in all models. The other, known as the Ram Charge, used dual 4-barrel carburetion with long ram induction manifolding, delivered 330 horsepower at 4,800 r.p.m. and was available for Adventurer cars only.

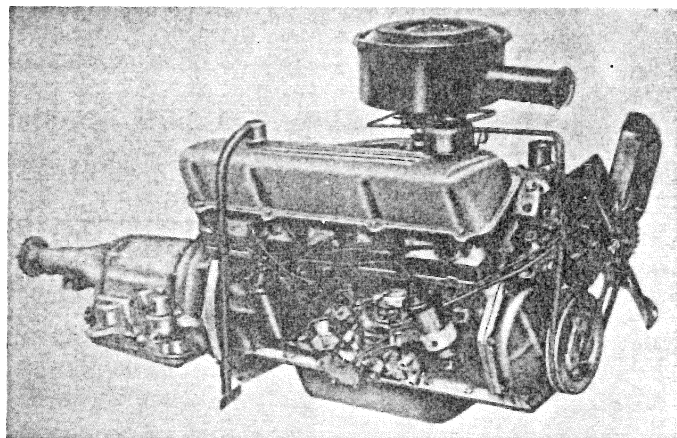
DeSoto now required a special order when a buyer wanted a car with manual-shift transmission. Obtainable on Fireflite cars only, it was not at extra cost. Unless ordered with the manual, Fireflites were built with either of two extra-cost units, PowerFlite or TorqueFlite. The latter continued as the only unit used in the Adventurer series. Neither DeSoto nor Plymouth repeated the rear-end air suspension option of 1959.

A new body rust and corrosion preventative method was used by Plymouth, Valiant and DeSoto. It involved a multi-step spray-and-dip process of alkaline cleanings and phosphate and zinc emulsion coatings. Sill innards were additionally coated with a virtually unmeltable wax. The system's development was spurred by excessive rusting of cars built during the past few years.

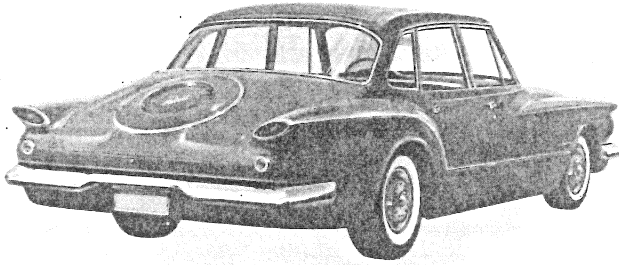
To bring its cars to the point of production, Chrysler Corp. spent 350 million dollars for design, development, new tooling and plant rearrangement necessary for new assembly techniques required by the Unibody designs. The Valiant program alone was said to have cost 100 millions.



The Valiant V-100 Suburban was available in two versions. The 2-seat vehicle, of which 12,018 were built, weighed 2,815 pounds and cost \$2,365. The 3-seat model was priced at \$2,488, weighed 2,845 pounds and was Valiant's least popular model, totalling 1,928 built. Valiant Suburbans were not placed in a separate category, such as the Plymouth practice, but shared the V-100 and V-200 series designations with the Sedans.



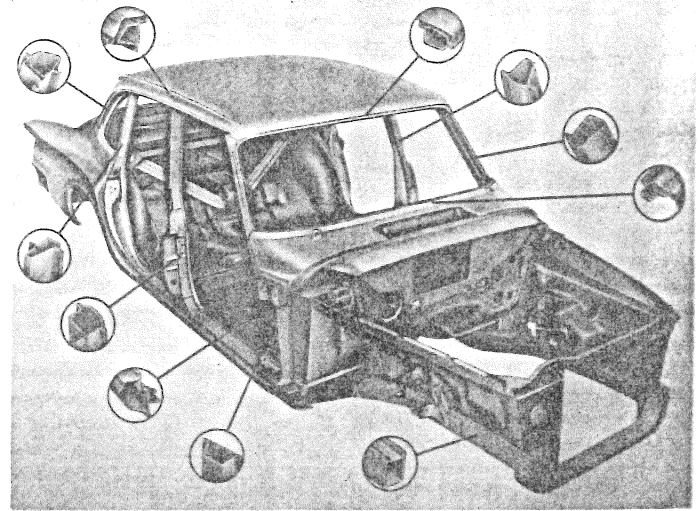
Shown is the Valiant engine, which was shared with Plymouth, whose specifications differed from Valiant. Engineers approached this development program from a new angle, giving the engine a 30-degree slant toward the car's right side. The tilted block, first of cast-iron but changed to aluminum in midyear, allowed a long-branch intake manifold and accessories on the left side, in turn presenting a lower hood potential. The in-line Six overhead valve engine had wedge-shape combustion chambers. As the standard for Valiant, it had a bore and stroke of 3.4 x 3.125 inches, displacement of 170 cubic inches, compression ratio of 8.5:1 and developed 101 horsepower at 4,400 r.p.m. For a V-200 option, 4-barrel carburetion and 10.5:1 compression provided 148 horsepower at 5,200 r.p.m. Also new this year was the alternator, which obsoleted the generator. Obscured by the fan in this view, it was not featured by Plymouth or DeSoto.



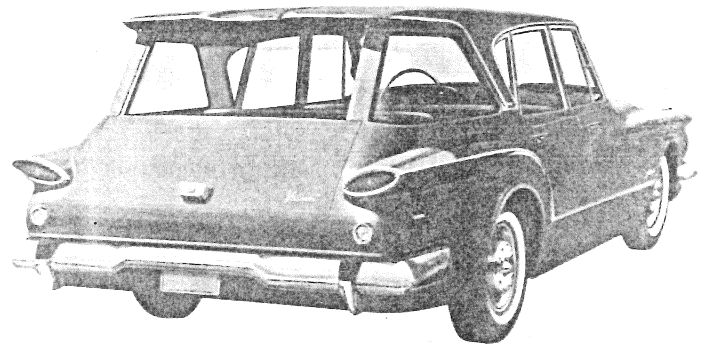
Valiant styling was distinctive and attractive, and did not include the use of tailfins. The simulated spare wheel cover on the deck were calculated to add class. Of the three new compact cars introduced this year, some industry observers opined that the Ford Falcon was conservative and practical, Chevrolet's Corvair rated special note because of its rear engine, while Valiant was the stylish one. Seen is Valiant's best seller, the V-200 4-Door Sedan, of which 106,515 were built. It weighed 2,655 pounds and cost \$2,130.



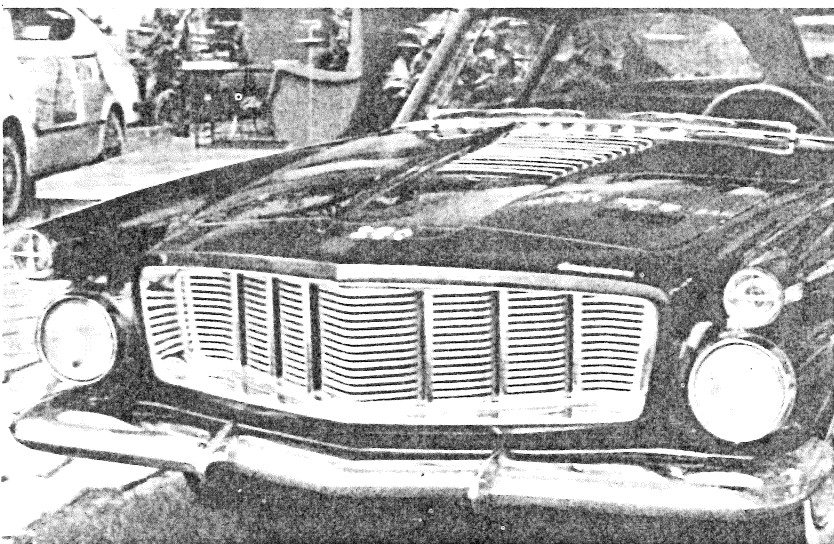
Doors opened to a full 70 degrees, allowing plenty of access to any Valiant interior. The V-200 4-Door Sedan shows styling that was typical of all Valiants, differing only in minor respects. Six persons could be seated and seat cushions were a comfortable height from the floor. Headroom was about 33.5 inches. Three color choices were available for V-200 interiors, in which seat material was nylon faced while bolsters and doors were of grained vinyl. V-100 interiors were only in shades of gray.



Valiant's unitized body construction is shown with detailed cross-section cuts to define significant structural members and points. Since this all-welded concept eliminated a chassis in the conventional sense, it was designed to allow lowering the unit over the engine, drive train and suspension components on the final assembly line. Over 5,300 spot and seam welds were used in this "monocoque" construction. The result was a unit of exceptional strength, in accordance with the Valiant name which was derived from the Latin word "valere," meaning strong. Plymouth and DeSoto employed a similar concept known as Unibody, in which the welded front end structure was bolted to the body proper.



The Valiant V-200 Suburban shows the bright side moldings typical of all V-200 Valiants. The 2-seat model, of which 16,368 were built, cost \$2,433 and weighed 2,855 pounds. The 3-seat car, of which 4,675 were built, was the heaviest and costliest Valiant, weighing 2,860 pounds and selling for \$2,566. In references to Suburban seating capacity, Valiant always noted the number of seats rather than the number of passengers. This fact hinted that Valiant would not admit that passenger capacity, particularly in the 3-Seat Suburban, was a bit shy of the nine that a Plymouth Suburban could carry. Valiant's rear-facing third seat was adequate for two adults, making the vehicle an 8-passenger car. With all but the front seat folded down, cargo space was 72 cubic feet. Suburbans shared a 106.5-inch wheelbase with the Sedans.



One of the early Valiants was turned into an interesting semi-fastback coupe. The 4-passenger 2-door car, created by Ghia in Italy, was of unusual design. Unique were the forward-thrusting parking lamps, from which the front fender crowns flowed rearward. The windshield and pillars were severely backswept. Louvers were applied to the depressed hood center. Above the grille center were what appear to be the numerals 250, and offside was a Chrysler nameplate.